DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 205 UD 032 265

AUTHOR Connell, Karen; Milenkiewicz, Margie
TITLE Education for Homeless Children and Youth. 1995-96 McKinney Funded Projects End of Year Reports.
INSTITUTION Colorado State Dept. of Education, Denver.
PUB DATE 1997-12-00
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Budgets; *Children; Federal Aid; Federal Legislation; *Homeless People; Program Effectiveness; Research Problems; Retrenchment; School Districts; *Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Colorado; *Stewart B McKinney Homeless Assistance Act 1987

ABSTRACT

In the 1995-96 school year, seven Colorado school districts, including urban districts, received grants under the federal McKinney Program for the homeless (Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act). The grant awards totaled $225,580 and served a total of 2,100 children. Although the same number of districts were funded as in the preceding year, a 25% budget cut caused a decrease in services to 200 children. This report is a compilation of the responses from the seven districts. School district representative comments are presented, attributed to the district, in the following areas: (1) difficulty in obtaining number estimates of homeless students; (2) problems and barriers to enrollment and success for homeless students; (3) school district responses to barriers to the enrollment and success of homeless students; (4) special needs of homeless children and youth; (5) program successes; (6) successful practices; and (7) increases or decreases in preschool access and older youth programs since the 1994 reauthorization. A case study of the use of McKinney-funded services is presented for each district. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 418 205

cde

Education for Homeless Children and Youth

1995-1996 McKinney Funded Projects End of Year Reports

The Education of Homeless
Children and Youth Program
Prevention Initiatives
Colorado Department of Education

Karen Connell, State Coordinator
Margie Milenkiewicz, Outreach/Training Coordinator

December 1997

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

N. Bolt
CDE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table of Contents

Introduction

Difficulties with Count Collection 1

Problems/Barriers 2

School District Responses 3

Special Needs of Homeless Children 4

Program Successes 5

Successful Practices 8

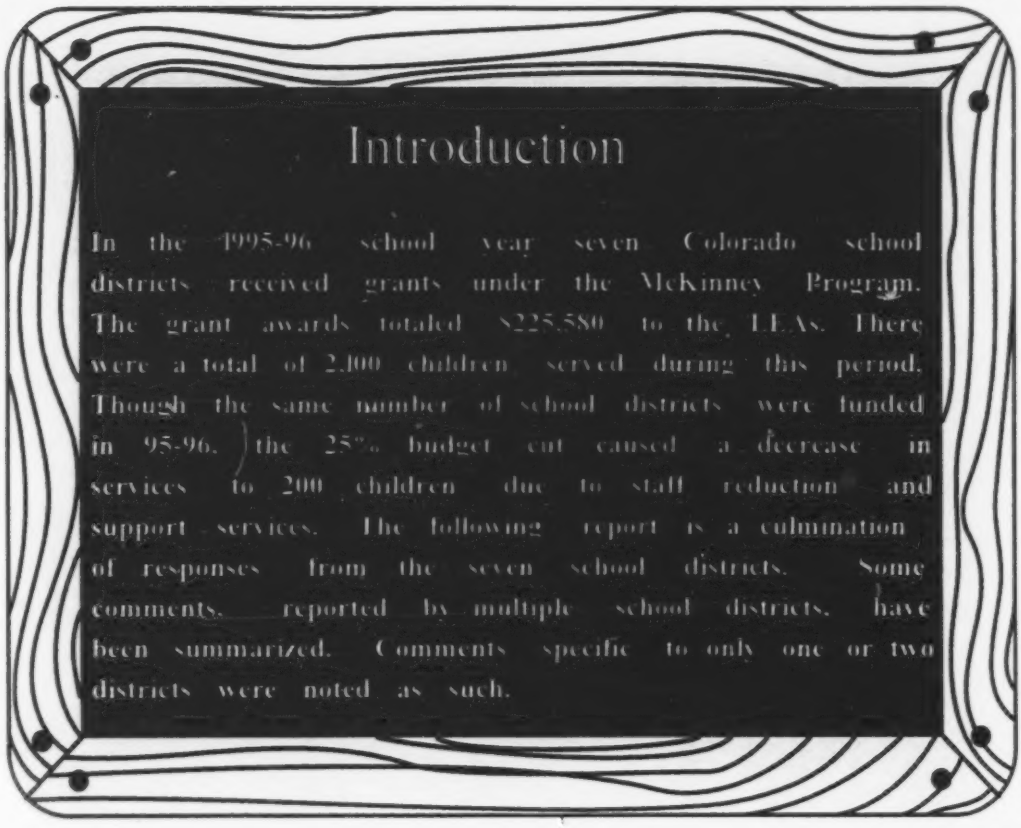
Preschool and Older Youth Access 9

Statistics on Projects and School Districts 11

Anecdotal Stories

1995-96 McKinney Funded Projects

Colorado Springs School District #11
Denver County School District #1
Poudre School District R-1
South Platte Valley BOCES
Pueblo County School District #60
Thompson School District R2-J
St. Vrain Valley School District RE-J1

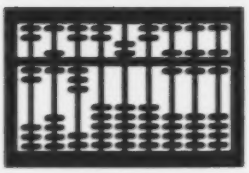


Introduction

In the 1995-96 school year seven Colorado school districts received grants under the McKinney Program. The grant awards totaled $225,580 to the LEAs. There were a total of 2,000 children served during this period. Though the same number of school districts were funded in 95-96, the 25% budget cut caused a decrease in services to 200 children due to staff reduction and support services. The following report is a culmination of responses from the seven school districts. Some comments, reported by multiple school districts, have been summarized. Comments specific to only one or two districts were noted as such.

Colorado State Board of Education

Patricia M. Hayes, Chariman - Aurora
Thomas M. Howerton, Vice Chairman - Colorado Springs
Clair Orr - Kersey
Pat Chlouber - Leadville
Patti Johnson - Broomfield
Gully Stanford - Denver
John Evans - Parker



Difficulty in Obtaining Number Estimates of Homeless Students

- "The main barrier for the homeless families themselves in this area is the language difference. Many efforts have been made to reach out to limited-English speaking families by providing information in both languages." (FORT MORGAN)

- Estimating the number of double-ups as students/parents frequently don't share this information with school personnel.

- In-services for school personnel and a revision of the counting process and forms utilized have increased the accuracy of the school count over the past few years. (ST VRAIN)

- Mobility: students change schools and/or shelters without notification. (DENVER)

- Training/information sessions need to be presented yearly. (DENVER)

- Pupil enrollment cards do not have indications of homeless addresses. (DENVER)

- Lack of knowledge by school personnel about who is homeless. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Identifying families who are living in campgrounds, hotels, motels and safehouses has been made easier through the working partnership of the district homeless liaison and the district's Department of Planning and Evaluation. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Schools do not keep a readily accessible list of students who are considered homeless. (POUDRE)

- School personnel are not required to report homeless students to the school counselor in order to keep up to date records. (POUDRE)

- Some schools do not want to acknowledge homeless students as public record because of the stigma or concerns it may create with some of their other families. (POUDRE)

- Some schools prefer to handle all problems concerning their students themselves. (POUDRE)

Problems/Barriers to Enrollment and Success for Homeless Students

ENROLLMENT PROBLEMS

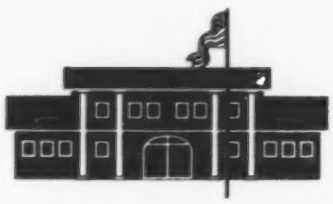
- Some schools are still requiring birth certificates and immunizations before a student can attend classes. (POUDRE, DENVER)
- Transportation for students who move daily, or several times a week, is often too difficult to set up. (POUDRE, COLORADO SPRINGS)
- Some homeless parents who do not consider school enrollment a priority for their children. (POUDRE)
- Transporting homeless parents without transportation to the school in order to enroll their children. (POUDRE)
- Transfer of records for homeless children who move regularly.
- Overcrowding in some schools precipitates the Board of Education to close the schools to additional enrollment; thus making it difficult at times to have homeless children attend their home school. (ST. VRAIN)

SUCCESS BARRIERS

- Delayed files from another state may cause a delay in Special Education placement.
- Students who move from school to school may have behavior problems because of their inability to form relationships with teachers and peers. (POUDRE, COLORADO SPRINGS)
- Need for school supplies. (POUDRE)
- Uninformed staff (clerical staff, teachers, social workers, principals, superintendents) can create a barrier. (DENVER)
- Teachers who don't understand the lack of a place to do homework, the lack of time a homeless student has to do homework, and the lack of homework support from homeless parents. (POUDRE, PUEBLO)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Some students have poor hygiene, lack of dental care and head lice. (PUEBLO)
- Families often have transportation barriers to get to school and also to attend medical appointments. (PUEBLO)
- Students who are in foster homes have their education disrupted when they are moved to different foster homes. (PUEBLO)
- High schools have policies/practices that state 5 unexcused absences and a student is out for the semester. (DENVER)
- Language can be a barrier. (DENVER)
- Lack of space and equipment for implementation of the program activities. (DENVER)
- Students can be inaccessible for a variety of reasons - absences, schedules of classes, practices in a school which do not allow a student out of class unless it is an emergency.



School District Responses to Barriers to the Enrollment and Success of Homeless Students

- Homeless liaisons contact schools to fax student records, including: special education placement, birth certificates and immunizations. Assistance with funds for birth certificate replacement and free immunization clinic resources are provided when needed.
- Solutions to transportation barriers include: teaching older youth how to access public transportation and providing passes/tokens/coupons, school personnel assisting in the transportation of students on a limited basis; transport assistance from other community resources and school district transportation departments being educated about the need for flexibility to accommodate special needs of homeless students.
- Partnerships with homeless shelters, motels and other social service agencies who work with homeless families help publicize the need/parental responsibility for school enrollment and facilitation in the procedure process. (THOMPSON)
- The afterschool tutoring and homework programs, as well as in school partnerships with Title I programs, strengthen the academic and social support needed by homeless students.

- Utilizing community resources and limited McKinney funds provide students with needed school supplies. Additionally access to the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) Program through Title I allows homeless students the opportunity to take books for their personal reading. (POUDRE)

- School district homeless liaisons attend semi-annual seminars, conferences and workshops on the education of homeless children and youth. This information is presented in the form of in-services for local school district personnel.

- Homeless students with medical needs are provided resources and transportation assistance, if requested, to access needed medical treatment.

- Basic needs such a food, clothing, eye glasses and other items that prohibit learning are addressed, either directly at schools or in conjunction with community resources.

- A working rapport with the school social workers and counselors and foster parents helps in the provision of continuity by keeping homeless students in their school of origin, when at all possible.

- A middle school coordinator has been allocated in order to problem solve situations with shelters, high schools and students, in particular in regards to school attendance/absence practices. (DENVER)

- Some districts have translators/interpreters to attend teacher/parent conferences and to translate notes, forms, handbooks and other forms of written and verbal communications with parents where English is not the dominant language of the family.

- Community resourcing, grant writing and fundraising efforts take place within different school districts to secure needed supplies and materials to support the local homeless projects.

Special Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

- Providing special education for students who arrive from other states is problematic at times due to the lengthy time it takes for the testing. (ST. VRAIN, COLORADO SPRINGS)

- The cost of preschool in St. Vrain is at the expense of parents and scholarships are not often available for homeless families.

- Transportation for preschool students is a constant need St. Vrain School District assists with when possible.

- Raising the academic skills for the majority of homeless students to grade level

- Access to medical and dental care

- Middle and high school students were reluctant to state they were homeless and thus there were delays in receiving free lunches and waivers for activity fees. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Transportation, economics, language,clothes, housing, child care, transient status and abuse present special needs. The issues are raised and discussed by members of the Denver Task Force. Internal district and external agency support and resources are contacted to address these special needs. Each problem is addressed and often brain storm sessions are used to identify solutions.

- Individual tutoring and mentoring are addressed in a myriad of ways through Title I, partnership programs with the university, individual support from school social workers. (POUDRE)

- Clothing needs are taken care of from school staff donations and support from the community. (POUDRE)

- Mental health/social work issues are dealt with through school social workers and CSU therapy for a reduced fee and help with transportation. (POUDRE)

- Tutorial services by a paraprofessional in small groups and on a one-to-one basis, boosted the children's knowledge of the English language and in other academic areas. (FORT MORGAN)

Program Successes

- Providing a paraprofessional for intensive language remedial tutoring for the children in a school with the highest percentage of homeless students and utilizing Migrant, Title I and ELPA programs to address the needs of other homeless students scattered throughout the school district. (FORT MORGAN)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- The use of a district translator/interpreter improved the communication and relationships between Spanish speaking families and the schools. (FORT MORGAN)

- District focus of services in schools with the highest percentage of homeless students have resulted in principal reports of improved behavior and attendance of students served. In addition the high school program has encouraged student interest and enrollment in college. (PUEBLO)

- Increased school district awareness and education of homeless students brought their superintendent and over 90% of one school staff to the shelter Child Enrichment Center. The awareness led to volunteers efforts in building repairs, additional tutoring support, food and basic need items and 2 new computers. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- 40 of 58 school principals and school social workers were educated by the district liaison which improved the overall district's awareness and working rapport with the homeless project liaison. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Continual effort was made to have schools complete the Self Assessment Guide. A low completion rate was reported and efforts need to continue. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Two presentations with the district support personnel resulted in an increased understanding of the needs of homeless students and the sponsorship of a supply drive to meet basic needs. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- 87% of the homeless students from the Red Cross shelter participated in the enrichment program summer activities. This exceeded the goal of 75% participation. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- The goal of a year round Study Center at the Red Cross shelter was reached with a total of 73 students participating. Partnerships with the school district and community agencies provided tutorial and computer support for students. Parental input was difficult to solicit, although favorable ratings were given when received. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Staff training on the McKinney program was accomplished for all district principals (THOMPSON, DENVER) and social workers. (DENVER)

- Improvement among school staff throughout the district was seen in the placement of youth in needed supplemental school programs. Project tutors/advocates assisted in this placement. (THOMPSON)

- There was an increase in dissemination of literature on the Transitional Assistance Program to selected campgrounds and motels. (THOMPSON)

- 100% of the Red Cross student residents were immunized for school. (COLORADO SPRINGS)

- Over 2000 hours of academic tutoring occurred in the school year. Staff positions were half of what was anticipated, thus some students would have benefited from more contact time and nine students were denied any services due to lack of staff. (THOMPSON)

- Contact was made with at least one parent/guardian of refereed student, with the exception of families who move before contact could be initiated and four students were not serviced due to lack of staff. Follow up parental/guardian contact was made on an as-needed basis. (THOMPSON)

- Homeless families were provided with information about school functions and support services. Transportation was provided when possible.

- Inservice training to all school in St. Vrain School District was provided with the distribution of the related materials. Additionally the training provided proven strategies to enhance the school success for homeless students in the district.

- Assistance with the pupil count and accompanying district forms was implemented to improve the data collection relative to information needed for homeless students

- A district staff survey was implemented to continue and expand staff awareness. The computer survey, developed by the homeless education team, found that in general staff awareness increased due to continue informal inservices held by the project staff. (POUDRE)

- An individual assessment, analysis and placement regarding particular needs of each homeless student was implemented. Comprehensive services and programs to best meet the needs (academic, social and health) were provided for each child. (POUDRE)

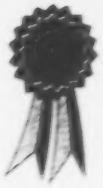
- Through a log of educational and support services provided to individual students and their families it is seen that there is a tremendous collaboration with the school and the community. In particular, Poudre School District has in place the Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Team (CHAT) and Special Resources Assistance Team (SRAT) to address the collective needs.

- 36 middle school students were enrolled in the Educational Opportunity Program and 20 were trained as tutors, receiving a small stipend for their work. (DENVER)

- Although an inservice for all Denver's district clerical staff was not possible to schedule, the inservice of social workers increased the identification of homeless students.

- Provision of before and after school child care.

Successful Practices



- School staff in-services regarding understanding, educating and support homeless students for all/most schools in the district.
- Partnership with the local cultural and educational community resources to provide homeless students with opportunities for growth and enrichment.
- Direct tutorial and other academic assistance, in particular using middle and high school students as tutor aides.
- The implementation of summer programs that emphasize educational, recreational, social and cultural development and enrichment activities.
- Providing school staff with written resources on the education of homeless students, including the curriculum guide: *Address Unknown: Unsheltered Lives* and *54 Ways to Help the Homeless*.
- Training of district and school personnel, regarding the definition of homeless, to improve in the efficiency and accuracy of the forms and procedures for identification of homeless students.
- Advocacy within the general community for better understanding and support of homeless people through community collaborations and individual contact.
- Partnerships with universities to provide homeless children individual and small group college tutors, mentors and positive adult role models to see the value and need for a solid education.
- To address the essential basic needs of homeless students (i.e., eye glasses, clothing, transportation, etc.) when these unmet needs act as barriers in the students' pursuit of education.
- Provide parenting classes and educational workshops and to pursue a strong outreach to encourage homeless families to attend.
- Deleting the word "homeless" and replacing "transitional" overcame the biggest barrier - that of parents feeling stigmatized. (THOMPSON)

- Connecting with local community resources to secure school supplies.
- Making specific contacts with medical/dental providers for free/reduced health care for homeless students.
- Securing fee reductions/waivers for students to participation extracurricular athletic, educational and recreational programs within the schools and/or community.
- A direct support from the district superintendent, making the awareness of homeless one of his goals for the year. He was instrumental in arranging for two new computers and software being placed at the shelter for the children's use. He proclaimed Hope for the Homeless Week in October 1995 in Colorado Springs District 11.
- Schedule open houses for school staff to visit the local shelter.
- The implementation of a family literacy program provided at the Colorado Springs Red Cross shelter and funded through a city block grant.
- Employing a bi-lingual translator/interpreter to meet the needs of Spanish speaking families. (FORT MORGAN)

Has Preschool Access/Older Youth Increased Since the 1994 Reauthorization?

POUDRE

Headstart is contacted to help homeless families access education for preschool age children. Specifically the preschool/elementary age students are targeted. Middle and High school students are provided support on an individual basis.

DENVER

In both instances access has increased as more and more staff, shelters and agencies are made aware of the needs of homeless children/youth.

ST. VRAIN

Access to preschool continues to be a challenge. Older students have the advantage of having transportation provided by the district which has increased their access to schools.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COLORADO SPRINGS

Preschool access has not changed noticeably. As spaces permits, one elementary school and a private daycare center make it possible for homeless preschoolers to attend. While enrollment of older youth is school has not noticeably increased, a greater awareness of available educational options has been provided to youth ages 16-18. Through the development of the shelter's Family Intake Packet/procedures, older youth receive information concerning alternative educational programs within the district.

FORT MORGAN

Question not addressed in report

THOMPSON

The placement of homeless preschoolers is a district priority. Transportation and age requirements are visited and dealt with to assure services are provided to this age group. Access by older youth is available to all high schools, particularly, the alternative high school. Several high school students received gas vouchers to increase their accessibility to school.

PUEBLO

Question not addressed in report

1995-96 Funded Homeless Project Statistics

District	Pre-K	K-8	6-8	9-12	1996 # Served	(Project) 1996 # Identified	(District) 1996-95# Served
Colorado Spgs	196	143	45	39	423	783	20/9
South Platte	45 (Total for all grade levels)				45	475	2/0
Poudre	27	230 (Total for K-12)			257	162	138/165
Denver	30	330	53	10	423	528	357/158
Pueblo	340 (Total for Pre-K-8)			55	495	---	862/719
Thompson	33	88	9	18	148	211	198/152
St. Vrain	200-250 (Total for all levels)				225	430	260/170

Top 5 School Districts without McKinney Funding

District	County	1996 #	1995 #
Mesa Valley	Mesa	63	85
Gilcrest RE-1	Weld	28	11
Cripple Creek/Victor RE-1	Teller	18	0
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	Arapahoe	380	625
Greeley	Weld	307	266

Top 5 School Districts for 1996 Homeless Student Count

Pueblo 60	862
Adams-Arapahoe	380
Denver	357
Greeley 6	307
St. Vrain	260

Thompson School District (Loveland)

"I Never Saw an Airplane in the Sky"

Eight-year-old Micaela, her five brothers and sisters, parents, grandmother, aunt, uncle and three cousins lived in an old, small two bedroom trailer. Micaela's parents are poor, uneducated and speak no English. Her father commuted over thirty miles to a low paying job leaving mother with no transportation. Micaela and her siblings were referred to the Transitional Assistance Program in September. None did well academically and the family had a great number of needs. The tutor/advocate immediately detected a possible vision problem with Micaela, made an appointment with an optometrist and took the entire family to the visit. Micaela received her new glasses a week later. Upon leaving the optometrist's office, she looked at a plane passing overhead and said in awe to her tutor/advocate, "I never saw an airplane in the sky before. I could hear it, but when I looked up it was all white. It looks little in the sky." With her new glasses and tutoring help, Micaela blossomed in her lessons.

But the story doesn't end there.

Micaela's condition is hereditary and the optometrist insisted on examining all the other children. Five of the six now wear glasses and, as with Micaela, schoolwork greatly improved. The optometrist accepted minimal compensation from program funds.

But the story doesn't end there.

Micaela's younger sister broke her arm at school and mother couldn't be located. The tutor/advocate was called from another school to take the little girl to the hospital. By the time the principal arrived with mother, the child was calmed and comforted and all the forms had been processed.

But the story doesn't end there.

Another sibling was found to be in need of surgery for hearing difficulties. Again the advocate was instrumental in locating a specialist and providing transportation to appointments. The surgery is pending.

The story continues.

The tutor/advocate kept in contact with the family over the summer. When the family moved to another community in late August, the new school district was immediately advised of their circumstances. One would think the story is drawing to a close.

But the story hasn't yet ended.

The oldest child, aged ten, recently called the advocate in tears. His uncle had been killed in a car accident the night before and the family wanted her to attend the funeral and the family gathering afterwards. Of course, she was there.

Perhaps now the story has ended. Perhaps not.

Without the Transitional Assistance Program on shudders to think how the story might have been told.

The Smiths are a family of seven who had lived at the shelter in the past. During the 1995-96 school year, they checked into the shelter again. This family had a history of moving from shelter to shelter and from motel to motel. There were five children ranging in age from six to fourteen.

When the family arrived at the shelter for the first time the shelter staff informed them that the children needed to register in school. Mrs. Smith told staff that the children had been home schooled for the past three years. After speaking further with Mrs. Smith, it was discovered that she had not worked with any school district in developing a curriculum, but had simply kept the children at home and taught them what she felt they needed to know. She decided to enroll them in Washington Elementary School. They attended Washington for a short period of time before moving into a motel.

A couple of months later, the family moved back into the shelter for a second time. It was then learned that the children had missed three weeks of school in between the time they had left the shelter (moving into a difference school boundary area) and enrolled in Ivywild Elementary School. Ivywild serves much of the homeless hotel/motel population. The liaison soon discovered that the children wanted to go back to Washington Elementary School, and quickly made the arrangements for the children to transfer back. During the course of their short stay at the shelter, these children who had been so eager to learn the first time around were becoming serious discipline problems for the staff at Washington. The aide assigned to Washington worked diligently with the children at school and quickly discovered that both the ten year old and eight year old could not read and had learned to disguise the deficiency of their skills.

As soon as this problem was identified, the aide worked on-on-one with the children at Washington and then made a daily visit to the shelter to discuss the progress and the ongoing needs of these children with the Study Center teacher. The Study Center teacher then developed lesson plans and activities to strengthen the reading skills of the Smith children. This collaboration worked well while the Smiths resided at the shelter, but all too soon they were back in a motel.

After this final disappearance of the Smith family from the shelter, the liaison called the principal of Ivywild Elementary School to see if the Smith children had re-registered there. They hadn't at that time, but did show up a week later. Ivywild then contacted the liaison and information regarding the reading skills of the children was shared. Ivywild was able to pick up where Washington left off. During this period, the Washington aide worked with the Smith children at Ivywild.

When the family arrived at the shelter for a third time, the children decided to stay at Ivywild Elementary. The bus stop for Ivywild was a bit further than the Washington bus stop, but it was still within walking distance, so transportation was not an issue to keeping these children in their "home" school. The Smith's third stay at the shelter was again a brief three weeks, but this time the children had the consistency of their school and the familiarity of the shelter's Study Center teacher and homeless education liaison.

This is a prime example of how the collaborative efforts of the schools, the school aide, the Study Center teacher, the shelter staff and the homeless education liaison were able to identify and address the educational needs of homeless children. Because each individual and organization was committed to supporting the needs of these children quickly and efficiently, these children received the help they desperately needed. They now have the tool of literacy to assist them as adults in this highly competitive world in which they live. They also learned that there is a whole network of people "out there" who will work very hard to take care of the educational needs that their parents struggle with.

Denver

During the past year there have been so very many wonderful things in our writing and print workshops that we were able to have small groups of children each day. The children were taught how to write correct sentences and put them into a story. They put their stories on the computer and printed them.

There stories were then illustrated by the children and made into a story.

Each child received a copy of their book beside the one we kept so other children could read their stories. This special work of one-on-one or one-on-three really gave the students great confidence in their ability to put their thoughts and adventures into a story.

Besides having the children create their stories we encouraged the parents to come to the program whenever they had a chance and dictate a story about when they were a child, or some story they wanted to tell to their children. We then listened to their story and typed it on the computer and put it into book form and made a copy for the parents.

At our awards dinner at the end of the year the children presented their book to their parents and the parents presented their story to their child.

It was so thrilling to see the parents reading their child's story and the children reading their parents story.

One little boy was so excited to hear his dad's story that he said "Now I'll be able to tell this to my children when I grow up".

One of the parents said that it was the first time they and their children had sat down to read together. They also were surprised to see their child so interested in their story.

Poudre School District (Fort Collins)

We realized that Andy and Amy's mother had a problem with alcohol dependency. It was the second year of our homeless program and teachers were well versed in how to best help and support Andy, who was in third grade, and Amy, who was in kindergarten. They also had a preschool age sister, Annette.

We enrolled the children in before and after school child care. Breakfast was provided at the school. Andy attended Homework Hotel and was able to make many good friends. Transportation through the homeless program made this all possible.

As Betty, their mother, moved from place to place, we were able to keep the children at the same school. We made every effort to help these children feel wanted at our school and we supported their mother with her needs as well by constantly being in touch with her and the other agencies that interacted with them.

Betty became involved with Ted, a homeless man she had met at the mission. Her comments led us to believe he was in some sort of trouble with the law and had alcohol and drug addictions. The children began coming to school with bruises and social services were called but nothing could be proven. One morning, Annette's child care provider called the homeless coordinator in tears stating that Annette had bruises all over her head and that they were evident even through her blonde hair. She was asked to bring Annette to the school and Social Services were called. After investigating, it was decided that there was not enough proof to incriminate Ted as the abuser. That night, Betty left the state with Ted and her children.

After spending a few days in Arizona, Ted was arrested by the police on an outstanding arrest warrant. Betty wasn't sure what she should do since her car was in poor condition and she had very little funds. She decided to ask the children what they wanted to do and they resoundingly responded that they wanted to return to their school in Ft. Collins.

They hadn't gone far when the car stopped cold. With no funds to get it fixed, Betty began hitch-hiking to Colorado with Andy, Amy and Annette. They received several rides and food from kindly people who stopped to help the woman with three small children standing out in the cold on the highway.

When they arrived in Ft. Collins, Betty called another homeless man she knew and asked for a ride to the school. I will never forget the call from the office that bright morning. They said I should go to the office because I wouldn't believe my eyes . . . and I didn't. The children ran up to hug me with huge smiles on their faces. Betty stood back sheepishly and then began to tell the story of where they had been. She said she knew she could get help from our school and she needed it.

Sadly, Betty continued drinking and the children were put in emergency care one night when two men started a fight in their motel room, breaking the large picture window. I was able to transport the children from their foster homes to school and day care for two weeks until Social Services were able to find a permanent placement for them. Andy lives in the foothills with a single woman who adores him. The girls live together in a nearby city. They meet with their mother every Wednesday as she is still struggling to beat her addiction. I know she loves her children. I know they love her. But I feel very good that through the collaboration of the homeless program, the school and community agencies, we were able to help these children feel loved and to give them a sense of belonging when they needed it the most.

Pueblo County School District 60

I have been working with a third grade girl for the past two months that doesn't talk to anyone at school. Since I have been working with her we have developed a friendship and talked about being shy. She has become more comfortable at school and has even volunteered to read in class. I know that was a big risk for her to take! I think our program really had a lot to do with her feeling more comfortable in the classroom and with her classmates who don't like to give someone different a chance. I feel fortunate to be able to make even one student feel that they fit in because everyone is special in some way.

Michelle Barber, Tutor
Columbian Elementary

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

South Platte (Fort Morgan)

One humorous incident that comes to mind involved a document that was translated from English to Spanish. Monica Sarkis, the translator/interpreter, was a native of Chile. Almost all of the families we work with are Hispanic, but that is a broad category within itself. Although Spanish is spoken in the original countries that the families hail from, sometimes there is a language difference from country to country on certain words.

One school building asked Monica to translate some information for the families, and after it was distributed, the school received several calls from Spanish-speaking parents. The secretary could not understand *exactly* what the complaint was, but she knew that it had something to do the the letter that was sent home, and that the parents were upset about it. Monica reviewed what was written, and determined that it did indeed say in Spanish what it said in English. She was satisfied that it was done correctly. However, another person from Mexico and one from Columbia both said that a certain verb used in the translation had vulgar connotations in their countries! Evidently it does not in Chile! A revised letter was sent out that passed inspection of a multinational committee! That was a learning experience for all of us!

St. Vrain Valley School District

Sandy's Story

We received a request from Longmont Estates Elementary School for a slot in our summer elementary program. They had a 5th grade girl, who not only needed support services for the summer, but also a place where she could be okay. This young lady, as we found out later, had been removed from two foster placements due to inappropriate behavior. she was also waiting for the court to terminate her parents' rights.

Sandy was bright, wonderful, ambitious, and angry. She read at a 3rd grade level, which made her extremely uncomfortable. Her first reaction when someone questioned her about reading was to get very angry. Math wasn't much better, but she had learned to tell people to let her figure out the work on her own and at her own pace.

It did happen, her parents' rights were terminated around the first of July. Sandy was to appear on *The Rocky Mountain Adoption Exchange*. She was frightened. She asked us to please adopt her so she wouldn't have to go. We assured her that she was bright and beautiful, and she could do it. Sandy was wonderful. Her charm and energy came across perfectly! And what of her fear that no one would want her? Well, on September 13th, a family whom she had been visiting asked if they could adopt her. Sandy is now living in Aurora with that family.

Summer School Program

I thought that working with the kids this summer was fun and a good experience for me. I thought that it was a good experience because it helped me understand kids better. One of the kids that I really got attached to was John. He was a really nice kid and was very talkative. I thought that he trusted me because he told me how he felt mostly everyday. He also told me any problems he had and I tried to help him. I also thought that the kids were great.

Lupe Cortez
Middle School Aide